Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended):   A computer system, comprising;

- ~~one~~ two or more directories comprising a plurality of directory objects each having one or more object attributes and data;

- a directory shell including directory references referencing said ~~one~~ two or more directories, wherein the directory references identify which directories that the directory shell can access;

- one or more categories in said directory shell, each of said categories being associated with ~~one or more~~ directory objects for the two or more directories and at least a portion of the associated object attributes;

- a query interface operable to query the categories in the directory shell, the query including at least one of said categories; ~~and~~

- a directory interface operable to send a search request to the ~~one~~ two or more directories in accordance with the query categories, and receive data from the ~~one~~ two or more directories that satisfies the search request; and

- a directory driver for each of said directories, wherein each of said directory drivers is operable to provide information to allow the directory interface to communicate with the directory.

Claim 2 (previously presented):   The computer system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the directories is LDAP compliant.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The computer system of claim 1, ~~further comprising one or more directory drivers each comprising~~ wherein the directory driver comprises schema data for one or more of said directories.

Claim 4 (original):   The computer system of claim 1, wherein said one or more directories are managed on a plurality of servers in communication with a computer onto which the directory shell is loaded.

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Claim 5 (previously presented): The computer system of claim 1, wherein the query interface is formatted in HTML.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The computer system of claim 1, further comprising an administrator utility to configure the categories and the query interface.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method in a computer system, comprising:
- creating a directory shell comprising one or more categories, wherein the directory shell comprises one or more directory references, each directory reference being associated with a directory and including data specific to the directory, wherein the directory reference identifies which directories the directory shell may access;
- associating said directory shell with one or more directories, wherein each directory comprises a plurality of directory objects having object attributes and attribute data;
- associating each of said categories with one or more directory objects and at least a portion of the object attributes corresponding to the directory objects;
- requesting a search for query data against a selected category; and
- searching the one or more directories for the query data against the attribute data corresponding to the directory objects and object attributes associated with the selected category.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein associating categories includes mapping category attributes with object attributes.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein requesting a search includes formatting a Boolean search.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 7, wherein the creating, associating with directories, associating with directory objects, requesting, and searching are performed sequentially.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A computer readable medium comprising a plurality of computer instructions for performing a method comprising:

-     creating a directory shell comprising one or more categories, wherein the directory shell comprises one or more directory references, wherein the directory references identify which directories the directory shell may access;

-     associating said directory shell with one or more directories, wherein each directory comprises a plurality of directory objects having object attributes and attribute data;

-     associating each of said categories with one or more directory objects and at least a portion of the object attributes corresponding to the directory objects;

-     requesting a search for query data against a selected category; and

-     searching the one or more directories for the query data against the attribute data corresponding to the directory objects and object attributes associated with the selected category.

Claim 12 (currently amended):   A propagated signal comprising a plurality of computer instructions for performing a method comprising:

-     creating a directory shell comprising one or more categories, wherein the directory shell comprises one or more directory references, each directory reference being associated with a directory and including data specific to the directory;

-     associating said directory shell with one or more directories, wherein each directory comprises a plurality of directory objects having object attributes and attribute data;

-     associating each of said categories with one or more directory objects and at least a portion of the object attributes corresponding to the directory objects;

-     requesting a search for query data against a selected category; and

-     searching the one or more directories for the query data against the attribute data corresponding to the directory objects and object attributes associated with the selected category.

Claim 13(currently amended):   A data structure, comprising:

-     one or more directories, each directory comprising a plurality of classes with attributes and a plurality of objects instantiated from said classes, wherein said objects comprise a plurality of data associated with the attributes;

-     a directory shell associated with said one or more directories and including one or more directory references;

-     a plurality of categories associated with said directory shell, wherein each category corresponds to ~~one or more~~ classes ~~in the one or more~~ that are associated with a plurality of directories;

-     a plurality of category attributes associated with each category, wherein each category attribute corresponds to an attribute of the class corresponding to the associated category; and wherein the directory shell is querable against the categories to search and retrieve data of the objects in the one or more directories.

Claim 14 (original):   The data structure of claim 13, wherein at least one of the one or more directories is a distributed directory.

Claim 15 (original):   The data structure of claim 13, wherein at least one of the one or more directories is LDAP compliant.

Claim 16 (original):   The data structure of claim 13, wherein at least one of the one or more directories is a hierarchical directory.

Claim 17 (previously presented):   The data structure of claim 13, wherein the categories and category attributes are object oriented programming classes.

Claim 18 (currently amended):   The data structure of claim 1_3_, wherein the category class is an ObjectScheme Java class and the category attribute class is an AttributeScheme Java class.

Claim 19 (previously presented):   The data structure of claim 13, wherein the directory shell includes one or more directory references each associated with at least one of the one or more directories.

Claim 20 (original):   The data structure of claim 19, wherein the one or more directory references each have a unique set of associated categories.